

DRW Statement on AB245/SB301

June 14, 2023

Disability Rights Wisconsin is opposed to the requirement of AB245/SB301 that would require the Milwaukee public school district to place 25 school resource officers (SROs) into district schools, overriding the district's own decision not to station law enforcement in its schools.

Research has failed to find that school safety increases overall when SROs are present. Having SROs in schools leads instead to a higher incidence of law enforcement referrals and arrests, frequently for issues that would otherwise be handled as routine school-disciplinary incidents. Students with disabilities are disproportionately impacted by law enforcement referrals; Wisconsin already has the second highest rate in the nation of referring disabled students to law enforcement, second only to Virginia. The presence of SROs contributes to the school-to-prison pipeline, particularly for students of color who have disabilities as well.

Disability Rights Wisconsin opposes the SRO requirement in AB245/SB301. We recommend ceasing to employ SROs in our state's schools altogether, investing instead in appropriate school personnel and programs to address the needs and safety of our students with disabilities.